



Air Force leadership calls for re-energized suicide prevention

By G.W. Pomeroy
AF Surgeon General Public Affairs

WASHINGTON — After experiencing 11 active-duty suicides since Jan. 1, and 14 during the final quarter of 2003, Air Force senior leadership is imploring commanders and leaders across the service to assess and re-energize suicide prevention efforts at all levels.

The 2003 calendar year suicide rate of 10.5 per 100,000 population was the lowest of all the military services and one-half the rate of a comparable civilian population of males between the ages of 20 and 50. As of Feb. 24, the service's suicide rate was 18.1.

In a letter being distributed to all major commands this week, the Air Force's acting assistant vice chief of staff urges the entire Air Force to continue pitching in to reduce the number of suicides.

"Suicide is not stopped by medical personnel in emergency rooms; it is

" Suicide is not stopped by medical personnel in emergency rooms; it is stopped by addressing quality of life issues in the on a daily basis. "

Lt. Gen Richard Brown III
AF Acting Assistant Vice Chief of Staff

stopped by addressing quality of life issues in the unit on a daily basis," Lt. Gen. Richard Brown III stated in the letter.

"The major components of the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program are active leadership involvement, an emphasis on community involvement, and a focus on prevention throughout the life of airmen and their families, not just when they are suicidal,"

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

Seeing stars

Deputy Surgeon General Maj. Gen. James Roudebush, right, congratulates 311th Human Systems Wing Commander Col. and Mrs. Tom Travis during Monday's promotion announcement ceremony at Hangar 9. Brooks personnel and distinguished visitors joined the Travis' in celebrating the colonel's recent selection for promotion to brigadier general.

Community leaders review plans for EOC at Brooks, talk homeland security issues

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

The planned construction of San Antonio's new Emergency Operation Center at Brooks and emergency preparedness initiatives that could help the city become a national center for homeland security were the focus of a Feb. 18 community stakeholders' meeting here.

The second in a series of Southwest Enterprise for Regional Preparedness Stakeholders and Participants Meetings, hosted by the Brooks Development Authority, addressed a number of innovative plans and ideas that are designed to leverage San Antonio as-



Photo by Rudy Purificato

Community leaders and Brooks personnel packed Bldg. 180's auditorium Feb. 18 for the Southwest Enterprise for Regional Preparedness Stakeholders and Participants meeting to discuss Homeland Security issues

sets with the collective goal of creating a locally developed homeland security industry.

Brooks is expected to play a major role in this community vision, leaders attending the meeting noted.

"We have to capitalize on the work being done in and around Brooks by building on what the Air Force has developed here for years," said former San Antonio Mayor Howard Peak, who

serves as BDA chairman.

Mr. Peak characterized the city's decision to locate its new EOC at Brooks as the foundation on which to develop a homeland security industry.

In November 2003, San Antonio and Bexar County voters in separate bond elections approved the new 30,000-square-foot, \$24.5 million EOC to replace the current one located at

" In Texas, 16 federally-declared disasters have occurred in the last 10 years, four of which included San Antonio. "

Rodney Hitzfelder
SAFD Deputy Chief

San Antonio Fire Department headquarters. Scheduled for completion in December 2007, the EOC will serve as the hub for several organizations dedicated to homeland security, including the Emergency Preparedness Institute. The EPI will be directly involved in public health and medical preparedness planning and coordination.

San Antonio Fire Department Deputy Chief Rodney Hitzfelder said, "Information is the key to emergency management. The EPI will serve as a model training facility, resource center and emergency preparedness nexus."

The EOC's regional importance, Mr.

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HAPPY ST. PATRICKS DAY



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Positive, flexible attitude helps face changes, meet challenges

By Lt. Col. Joanne M. Kile
11th Mission Support commander

BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, D.C. (AFPN) — Change is an ever-present part of today's Air Force. It is part of what makes our force great. When we switch leadership, whether it is a new commander at the wing, group or squadron level, or when we move to a new installation, we are providing ourselves an opportunity to do our job better.

A new set of eyes perceives performance in a new light. A new set of eyes inspires us to reach the next level of improvement. A new set of eyes makes us uncomfortable, which is a good thing.

Leadership change, like all change, is about the unknown. We don't know the expectations, and we don't know if we will meet them or not. Still, we don't need to be afraid of change; we need to embrace it and learn from it.

Embracing change is all about attitude. Being positive, open to ideas and ready for new challenges makes it easier to adapt and improve when change occurs. And change will occur.

Think about Air Expeditionary Force rotations. Every 90 days, a large number of Air Force folks are rotating into forward-deployed areas and an equal number are rotating back to their home units. That is change. The section you left doesn't stand still waiting for your return, it

moves forward. The checklist may be updated; your noncommissioned-officer-in-charge may PCS; your best friend may get married. It all changes. Even the forward area must adapt to a new set of airmen with the same core values and skills but different ideas on executing the mission every 90 days.

Another example of change is the new Air Force fitness assessment. This assessment directly supports our expeditionary culture and prepares us to be healthy, physically fit and capable of performing in any environment: air, space, mountainous terrain, desert terrain, arctic terrain or home station.

This new assessment emphasizes physical fitness and makes it an integral part of day-to-day operations. Unit physical training is also building esprit de corps and teamwork, leading to a stronger unit. Because of this, our expeditionary mission — and whatever the Air Force is asked to do next — will only benefit from this change.

Operating in a comfortable environment, an environment where everything happens as we expect, when we expect and with whom we expect, doesn't prepare us for the uncertainty of deployment and forward operations.

It seems to me comfort isn't part of serving in our Air Force. Openness, adaptability and core values are what keep our Air Force great.

So, stay positive and flexible.

Tragedy of war teaches leadership lessons

By Rod Krause
5th Bomb Wing safety office

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. (AFPN) — Every once in a while, life has a way of slinging a curve ball at your chin and waking you up. For me, it happened last summer when the war we all watch and read about materialized right in front of me. It taught me a valuable lesson in life and leadership.

It was supposed to be just another "check ride." I was flying with a crew handling an emergency aeromedical evacuation mission out of Kandahar, Afghanistan. After several previous flights into Kandahar hauling "beans and bullets," the missions once filled with trepidation had now become somewhat routine.

That's where the story starts.

All we knew was that someone had been shot in the face while on patrol. The critical care air transport team traveling with us also had very little information. Upon arrival, the surgeon tending to the patient briefed the medics, then the flight crew.

"John" (not his real name, but nonetheless a very real person) had been leading his unit through a crowd, when out of nowhere someone shot him in the left side of his face with a small caliber weapon. The bullet shattered his lower jaw, traveled through his mouth and exited his right cheek. According to all accounts, he then walked to a vehicle and was driven to a medical care facility.

When I first saw him on the stretcher, his head was completely bandaged, much like a winter cap that only reveals your eyes, nose and mouth. On the five-hour flight, the medical team worked to make him as comfortable as possible. After we landed, a specialist immediately saw him and said he should continue his journey to somewhere with more advanced facilities.

While those arrangements were being made, I stopped to talk to John. Despite the numerous tubes and IV lines, he was in good spirits. I suppose enough morphine has a way of doing that for you. He communicated by writing questions on a note pad. He

answered in the same manner. At one point, despite his condition, he had the energy to play an electronic game a nurse was carrying. I found that extraordinary. I can't reveal any of the personal information he shared, because he is one of the guys you don't see or hear.

John was one of the many members of the armed forces doing the work the president asked us to complete after Sept. 11, 2001. He did this dangerous task in less-than-desirable conditions under the cloak of anonymity.

Watching and talking to him, I suddenly felt the brutality and reality of war. Another human being with more guts than I will ever have was just doing his job when a nameless, faceless coward took a cheap shot, slithered back into the crowd and changed John's life forever. These are the kind of people we are fighting — the same cowards who fly civilian airliners into buildings full of innocent people.

Eventually, I helped carry John's stretcher to the ambulance. I gave him my squadron patch so when the morphine wore off, he would have a "road map" of those who helped get him to his destination. The nurse put it with his growing collection of unit patches. With a handshake and a "thumbs up" they took him away.

I hope to see him again someday, standing and smiling this time, so I can thank him for the lesson in life I learned that summer's night.

The experience taught me a lesson in leadership. In 1910, President Teddy Roosevelt gave a speech in France entitled "Citizenship in a Republic." From it was gleaned his famous "Man in the Arena" comments. If you have never read the speech, I encourage you to do so. It is an excellent example of the men and women currently waging the war on terrorism — the kind who put it on the line every day knowing the risk they take. They are the kind who are not afraid to try and make the world a better and safer place for everyone. They are the kind who, when the curve ball comes in chin-high, lean out over the plate a little more the next time.

They are true leaders — the ones who encourage others to keep fighting regardless of the odds against them.

They are the kinds of men and women President Roosevelt would have loved. They are the true heroes. God bless 'em all.



AFAF kicks off at Brooks

The Air Force Assistance Fund "Commitment to Caring" campaign runs through May 7, asking airmen to contribute to any of four Air Force-related charities. The charities benefit active-duty, Reserve, Guard, retired Air Force people, surviving spouses and families. This is the 31st year of the fund drive. Charities receive 100 percent of designated contributions. "Last year the Air Force Aid Society helped 30,000 airmen with (more than) \$22.6 million in assistance. That's a lot of help. Contributions are vital for the society to sustain this kind of help. It is truly an airmen-helping-airmen program," said retired Lt. Gen. Mike McGinty, Air Force Aid Society chief executive officer.

The secretary and chief of staff of the Air Force recently announced a \$5.2 million goal. In 2003, Air Force people gave \$5.9 million to the fund.

"As solid American community members, we in the armed forces are frequently expected to contribute our time and sometimes money to support those who need extra assistance," said Col. Tom Travis, 311th Human Systems Wing commander. "And, as a rule, we do this with a generous spirit. In the case of the AF Assistance Fund, we are providing assistance to our own people when they need our help the most. I proudly support it every year, and ask that you consider giving what you can to the AFAF again this year."

People can contribute by cash, check, money order or payroll deduction to:

— The Air Force Aid Society, the official charitable organization of the Air Force which provides airmen and their families with worldwide emergency financial assistance, education assistance and an array of base level community-enhancement programs.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brandy Bogart

Col. Tom Travis, left, 311th Human Systems Wing commander, and Vice Commander Col. Laura Alvarado, right, get help completing their Air Force Assistance Fund campaign contribution forms from Tech. Sgt. Earl Morgan.

Base family support centers have full details on programs and eligibility requirements. Information is also available online at: www.afas.org

— The Air Force Enlisted Villages in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., near Eglin Air Force Base, which provides rent subsidy and other support to indigent widows and widowers of retired enlisted people 55 and older. More information is available at: www.afenlistedwidows.org

— The Air Force Village Indigent Widow's Fund, a life-care community in San Antonio for retired officers, spouses, widows or widowers and family members. The Air Force Village Web site is www.airforcevillages.com

— The General and Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation, which provides rent and financial assistance to indigent widows and widowers of officers and enlisted people in their own homes and communities. The LeMay Foundation Web site is www.lemayfoundation.org

Contributions to the AFAF are tax deductible. For more information, visit <http://afassistancefund.org> or www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/votefund.

Hamilton wins at command

By Steve VanWert

Staff writer

Linda Hamilton, deputy chief of the Aircrew Protection Division at the 311th Human Systems Wing's Human Systems Program Office, has been named 2003 Aircrew Life Support Civilian of the Year by Air Force Materiel Command. Ms. Hamilton will go on and compete at Air Force level next month.

Ms. Hamilton was nominated for this award by Lt. Col. Deborah Determan, chief of the division, who said, "Linda's continual commitment to excellence has resulted in many Air Force level improvements to the life support program and she is highly deserving of this prestigious award."

"It's a great honor to be recognized by the life support community. We must never forget the sacrifices and challenges they face, and we should make every effort to make sure our aircrew members' life support equipment keeps them safe and enhances their ability to fight, win and survive," Ms. Hamilton said. "It's been a total team effort over the past year, both for the Aircrew Protection Division, and the Human Systems Program Office and Wing leadership up through Lt. Gen. (Richard) Reynolds (Vice Commander, Air Force Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio) in order to restore a level of funding to improve aircrew protection for our airmen and women."

Primary among Ms. Hamilton's accomplishments in 2003 was her effort on funding. She developed a budget submission representing the entire life support community, which resulted in \$54 million of unfunded requirements becoming the number



Hamilton

“It's a great honor to be recognized by the life support community. We must never forget the sacrifices and challenges they face...”

five priority in the Air Force. She tirelessly fought to bring the career field's requirements to the attention of the decision makers and highlighted shortfalls to the highest levels of the Air Force. This resulted in the chief of staff of the Air Force approving funding of \$26.4 million for aircrew laser eye protection and \$19.2 million for aircraft ejection seat safety improvements.

Also in 2003, Ms. Hamilton served as acting division chief for four months upon the former chief's retirement. The division ran flawlessly during that time, ensuring a smooth transition to new leadership. She also directed the first Department of Defense-Japan cooperative development program for ejection seat modification, co-chaired the Aircrew Protection Executive Committee post-conference and guided the SPO's mishap investigation program.



Base's top honor a first for 311th HSW team

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

A 311th Human Systems Wing Integrated Product Team became the first Plans and Programs Directorate organization to earn the base's highest honor when it received the Commander's Award Feb. 25.

The seven-member team earned the award for the third quarter of 2003 for its contributions that enhanced management of 311th HSW Defense Health Program activities.

"This team collected information and designed, developed and delivered an itemized spreadsheet that provided total visibility of all Wing Defense Health Program sponsored programs," said Dr. Rodger Vanderbeek, director of the 311th HSW Plans and Programs Directorate. Dr. Vanderbeek noted in the award nomination that the XP IPT's "effort will have a positive long-term effect on the ability of the Wing to accomplish its mission in an efficient and effective manner and to better support the warfighter."

" XP IPT's effort will have a positive long-term effect on the ability of the Wing to accomplish its mission in an efficient and effective manner and to better support the warfighter. "

Rodger Vanderbeek
Director, 311th HSW Plans and Programs

The IPT's work also helped senior leaders prioritize Wing mission activities and make management decisions resulting in a Manpower Resource Tool exercise that further enhanced efficiency.

The Plans and Programs Directorate workforce joined 311th HSW Commander Col. Tom Travis in recognizing the accomplishments of the team that included Maj. Karen Agres and Larry Parsons, Liz Martinez, Blanca Peredes, Lillie Garcia, Col. James Neville and Lt. Col. Barbara Wolfe.

Financial Services Office implements new reserve travel system

By Steve VanWert
Staff writer

The Brooks Financial Services Office recently implemented a new travel voucher payment system called the Reserve Travel System. But as with any new system, delays may occur as workers become used to the new program.

"Our goal is to pay all temporary duty vouchers within five days of receipt," said Lt. Col. Debra Doucette, director, Financial Management and Comptroller.

"As we transition to our new system and get trained, we anticipate that we may not meet this goal in processing vouchers. To

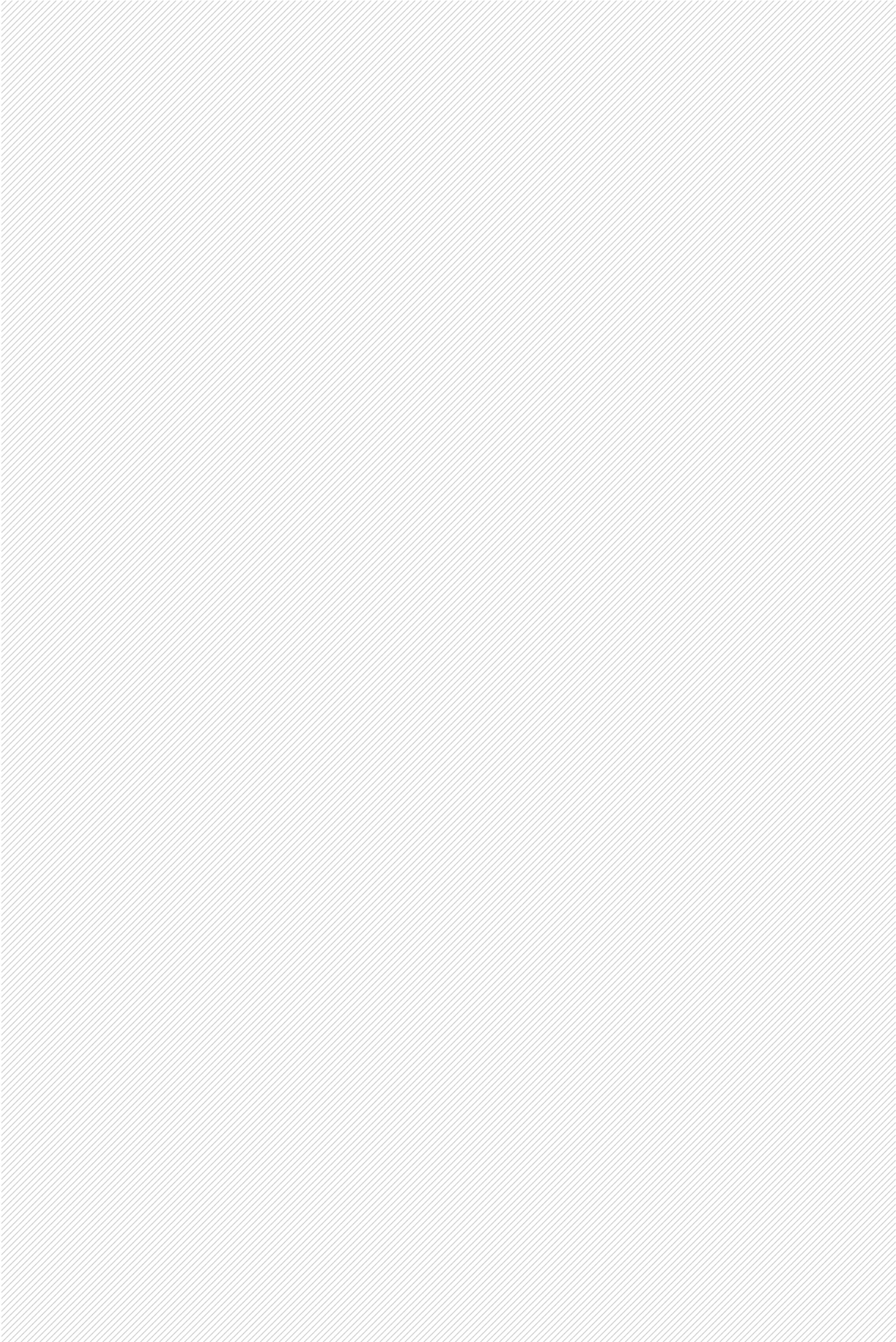
help us, and to avoid numerous phone calls, we request that you wait seven business days before you call about your voucher," she said.

One of the significant changes that affects the Brooks populace is that members can no longer track individual vouchers through the Web site. As FSO workers complete a voucher, they will send each member an email copy of the paid voucher, just as they did in the past. Their goal is to be fully trained and meeting the five-day goal by the end of March.

Military members may establish a travel pay account different from their military pay account.

If anyone wishes to do so, contact the customer service counter to complete the necessary documentation. Members will need to bring their bank's routing number, as well as their bank account number.

For more information, contact the FSO Customer Service section at 536-5778.





Personnel services now available on AF Portal

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — The days where people need to remember numerous user IDs and passwords for basic online personnel services are coming to an end thanks to the Air Force Portal.

"The portal is a powerful tool," said Col. Gregory Touhill, director of personnel data systems at the Air Force Personnel Center here. "We took the personnel applications our military and civilian employees use most often and made them accessible via the portal."

"Now, an airman deployed anywhere in the world has access to his or her personnel records through the portal," he said. "Especially with so many high-demand applications available, it's time everyone got an account."

By logging on to the Air Force Portal, users will have "reduced sign-on" access to 14 of the most used personnel Web services.

The Air Force Portal is located at: www.my.af.mil.

"Users won't have to remember several passwords and input them every time they want to get into a particular application anymore," Colonel Touhill said. "Instead, airmen can log into the portal when they come to work and use the available applications all day long."

The military personnel-related areas now available include:

- Virtual military personnel flight.
- Officer Qualification Test score.
- Military Personnel Data System
- Password change utility
- Reserve Management Vacancy
- Retraining lists for the NCO re-training program.

- Virtual out-processing
- Web-based testing

The civilian personnel-related areas now available include:

- Career brief
- Electronic official Personnel Folder
- Emergency Medical Data System
- Employment Benefits Information
- Employment
- Career Program registration

Having reduced sign-on access from desktop computers to personnel information saves people from having to wait in line at their local personnel flight, Colonel Touhill said. Now for many of those services, users will not have to remember separate passwords, he said.

The Air Force chief of staff has said he wants all airmen to establish a portal account by April. Establishing an account takes only a few minutes, officials said.

For more information about the portal or any of the online applications, call the Air Force Contact Center at (800) 616-3775.

Enlisted Promotions

The following Brooks enlisted personnel were selected for promotion to the next highest grade:

To senior master sergeant:

Karl Joseph
311th Human Systems Wing
Air Force Medical
Support Agency

To technical sergeant:

Shawn Bendixson
U.S. Air Force School of
Aerospace Medicine

Joseph Brown
311th Security Forces Squadron

Christopher Burnett
311th Medical Squadron

Anthony Francisco
Air Force Research Laboratory

William McHale
311th SFS

Jose Murillofierro
311th Mission Support Group

To staff sergeant:

Michael Chacon
68th Information
Operations Squadron

To senior airman:

Darel Griffin
68th IOS

Crystal Ray
311th Communications
Squadron

Sean Weins
68th IOS

Melissa Harwell
311th CS

Raymond Ruiz
311th CS

To airman first class:

Jennifer Fantony
311th Mission Support Group

Carrie Coffey
311th MSG



ACTION LINE

536-2222



Col. Tom Travis
311th Human Systems
Wing commander

The COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE is your opportunity to make Brooks a better place to live, work and play.

If you have a suggestion for improvement, a complaint or a problem that you have not been able to resolve through normal complaint channels or the chain of command, call the COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE, 536-2222.

Only items of general interest will be published, so please leave your name and number for a personal response.

The base agencies listed below can be contacted directly:

311th Security Forces Squadron.....	536-2851
SFS after duty hours.....	536-2851
311th Civil Engineer Squadron.....	536-3861
311th Communications Squadron.....	536-6571
311th Mission Support Group Logistics Division.....	536-3541
Safety.....	536-2111
Housing Maintenance.....	533-5900
Housing Office.....	533-5905
311th Services Division.....	536-2545
311th Medical Squadron (Clinic).....	536-4715
Military Personnel.....	536-1845
Civilian Personnel.....	536-3353
Military Pay.....	536-5778
Civilian Pay.....	536-8370
I.G. (FWA).....	536-2358
Military Equal Opportunity.....	536-2584
EEO Complaints.....	536-3702
BX Market.....	533-9079
Brooks Development Office.....	536-3655
Brooks City-Base Marketing and Development Office.....	536-5366



Brooks Family Support Center activities

Call 536-2444 for information

Grant applications accepted

The General Henry R. Arnold Education Grant program awards \$1,500 grants to dependent sons and daughters of:

- Active duty, Title 10 Air National Guard/Reserve personnel on extended active duty, and Title 32 Guard/Reserve performing full-time active duty;
- Members who retired due to length of active duty service or disability, or retired Guard/Reserve with 20-plus qualifying years creditable for retired pay; and
- Servicemembers deceased while on active duty or in retired status.

Spouses of active duty and Title 10 Guard/Reservists on extended duty stationed stateside, and surviving spouses of Air Force members who died while on active duty or in retired status are also eligible.

The grant will be awarded to a high school graduate enrolled or accepted as a full-time

undergraduate student in the 2004-2005 academic year. Use of fund is limited to tuition, books and fees, or other direct educational expenses. Contact the Family Support Center for details, or visit the Web site at: www.afas.org. Application deadline is March 12.

Sponsor training

March 16, 10 - 11 a.m., Bldg 537: In accordance with Air Force Instruction 36-3011, sponsor training is mandatory for all first-time sponsors and for those who haven't sponsored in the last year. The class, however, is open to everyone. Come learn about available tools and resources.

VA benefits assistance hours

Wednesdays, alternate Fridays, 9-1 p.m., Bldg. 537—

The on-site VA representative at Brooks now has expanded hours to better accommodate base personnel. Schedule an appointment to receive claims assistance, screen medical records or have a one-on-one consultation. Members must bring the original and two copies of medical records. These benefits are available only by appointment. Call the Family Support Center at 536-2444 for additional information and scheduling.

Consumer credit counseling

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Bldg. 537— You can get out of debt with a debt management plan. Call 536-2444 to schedule an appointment with a credit counselor.

Call the Family Support Center at 536-2444, or toll free at 877-747-5938, to register for class, make an appointment or for more information.



CMSAF addresses quality of life

By Staff Sgt. Melanie Streeter
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — The service's ranking enlisted member addressed quality-of-life issues to the House subcommittee on military construction Feb. 25.

Overall, quality of life in the Air Force has greatly improved, contributing to increased morale and retention, said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald Murray. However, that quality of life is not the biggest contributing factor.

Full text of Chief Murray's testimony can be found on the Air Force's Internet home page at www.af.mil by clicking on senior leader viewpoints.

"Today (morale) is the best I've ever seen it," Chief Murray said. "It is not (based on) leisure or comfort. It is ... based on commitment and dedication to a cause that is much greater than any individual, and they do believe in what they are doing."

But there are still some areas of concern. Among them are veteran's education benefits, infrastructure improvements, deployment schedules and the Air Force's need to trim down its end-strength by more than 16,000.

The issue with veteran's education benefits is fast becoming a pressing issue for those approaching retirement.

"There are 42,000 airmen who have no opportunity for veteran's benefits," the chief said. "The group hit the hardest are those retiring now, or who will be in the next few years who declined to enroll in the Veteran's Assistance Education Program offered from 1977 to 1985."

These senior noncommissioned officers served during a time of increased operations tempo, from operations Desert Storm to Iraqi Freedom.

"They now find themselves leaving military service without the opportunity to complete the college degrees that duty to their country often kept them from obtaining," Chief Murray said.

Besides the inequity of benefits, the Air Force is facing growing deficiencies in infrastructure, Chief Murray said.

"Deteriorated airfields, hangars, waterlines and electrical networks are just some of the infrastructure elements warranting immediate attention," he said.

Many airfields and hangars date back to the days of the Army Air Corps, said the chief. Some maintainers work in hangars where the conditions are not much better than working outside.

"It's imperative that we address these needs and give our airmen first-class facilities to perform their jobs at peak efficiency," he said.

With the current deployment situation, airmen are tasked to perform those jobs efficiently around the world.

"At the height of OIF, more than 40,000 of our airmen deployed to 36 locations around the world," Chief Murray said. "Today that number totals more than 20,000, including Guard and Reserve forces and even some of our civilians."

While the majority of airmen are organized into air expeditionary forces, deploying on a 90-day, 15-month cycle, that cycle was suspended to meet the requirements of OIF. Many airmen were deployed for indefinite amounts of time.

"We're now returning the majority of our force back into a standard AEF rotation," Chief Murray said.

Airmen are getting really used to deployments, with nearly two-thirds of the force having deployed, many more than once. "I recently spoke to a 13-year technical sergeant in our Air Force," the chief said. "In 13 years, he has deployed on 13 extended deployments. I asked him how he felt about this. He said, 'Chief, it's what we do.'"

"It is indeed what we do today," he said. "Because of that, I am asking for your continued support on the issues and programs important to our young men and women and their families."

One of those issues that recently became important is the Air Force's need to cut end-strength by more than 16,000. "We will now take steps to ask more than 16,000 airmen to separate voluntarily from our ranks," Chief Murray said. "Our intent is to reach our end-strength objective without losing critical skills or separating quality, experienced airmen from our Air Force."

The chief also touched on retention and recruiting, housing improvements and policy changes, the renewed emphasis on physical fitness, and the contributions of Guard and Reserve forces.

Initiatives

Continued from Page 1

Hitzfelder said, cannot be underestimated.

"Texas leads the nation in rail accidents, is number one in tornados and flash floods and second in the nation in hurricanes. In 2002, wildfires caused \$9 million in damage," the deputy chief said, adding, "In Texas, 16 federally declared disasters have occurred in the last 10 years, four of which included San Antonio." Mr. Hitzfelder said the new EOC will greatly enhance the city's capability to respond to future emergencies.

The deputy chief said the new EOC represents a critically important upgrade to emergency preparedness through state-of-the-art computer monitoring and communications systems, shared by city and county emergency management teams. The planned EOC will be staffed 24 hours, seven days a week and will feature 3-1-1 emergency operators.

More importantly, the new EOC will serve as an anchor for other proposed Brooks-based organizations dedicated to emergency preparedness and homeland security issues. They include a Texas Center for Excellence for Health and Medical Preparedness, a Department of Homeland Security Center for Education and Training and an International Institute for Human Performance. Meeting presenters noted that Brooks is the preferred site for these proposed organizations.

The gathering also showcased the South Texas Homeland Security Initiative, the South Texas Information Sharing Network and the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security.

The South Texas Homeland Security Initiative proposes to leverage the \$140 million Texas Department of Transportation TransGuide highway monitoring system. STHSI proposes to secure part of the security and monitoring device market by using the TransGuide system to test and evaluate new sensor technology. Other proposals include using TransGuide to transmit trauma guidance from doctors at medical facilities to ambulance-based emergency medical technicians, helping treat patients enroute to the hospital.

The South Texas Information Sharing Network plans to forge new communications relationships with commercial enterprises such as H.E.B. and financial institutions, in developing cyberterrorism countermeasures. The organization previously addressed city-wide computer vulnerabilities during a series of federally funded "Dark Screen" cybersecurity exercises.

CIAS, a research center created years ago at Brooks, will continue developing collaborations to help protect the local metropolitan area's communications and infrastructure from being compromised by cyberterrorism.

The SERP meeting showcased a developing culture of cooperation and collaboration that exists between military and civilian community stakeholders. "Nine months ago we met here to talk about opportunities for San Antonio to relate emergency operations and preparedness to its integration with economic development," said Mayor Ed Garza. He explained that military-civilian partnerships developed here since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks have created a venue to build a local homeland security industry that could be larger than the city's biomedical and health care industries.

Mayor Garza predicts this can be accomplished through initiatives promoted through SERP, which he said "represents a new way of thinking" in terms of economic development.

"SERP was launched nine months ago to explore if San Antonio has the assets to be a major player in the homeland security arena. We're more convinced than ever," said Randy Goldsmith, executive director of the San Antonio Technology Accelerator Initiative.

Mr. Goldsmith said homeland security is one of the fastest growing industries in America. The federal government and private sector have spent around \$140 billion on homeland security initiatives, including information and communications security, science and technology development, emergency response, preparedness, transportation and municipal water security. "Our objective is to capture more than our fair share of these dollars," he said.



Brooks scholarship event fetes landmark Supreme Court case

By Rudy Purificato

311th Human Systems Wing

Four students who received Bernard P. Randolph scholarships here Feb. 26, during the base's flagship Black History Month commemorative event, contributed to the national 50th anniversary celebration of the landmark Supreme Court decision that desegregated America's public schools.

The African-American Cultural Association hosted the 12th annual luncheon at the Brooks Club where student essay winners were presented a total of \$3,000 in scholarships for fulfilling this year's theme: Brown vs. the Board of Education 30 Years Later: The Politics of Excellence.

Tiffany Marie Smith, a Reagan High School senior, earned a \$1,000 first place award in the high school division. She plans to initially major in the performing arts at the University of Texas at San Antonio. McCollum High School senior Kimberly Dawn Jordan earned a \$500



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alfonso Ramirez Jr.

scholarship in the high school division. She plans to major in biology at UTSA. College-division winners of \$1,000 and \$500 scholarships were Edee Renee Schultz and Kristen Renee Weniger, placing first and second. Schultz, a 1998 Providence High School graduate, is a UTSA nursing major. Weniger, who also plans a medical career, attends Texas A&M

University at College Station.

This year's scholarship essays focused on the impact of the 1954 Supreme Court case involving the right of Linda Brown, an African-American elementary school student, to attend an all-white public school in Topeka, Kan. This landmark case forever changed the educational landscape in America and was a civil rights event.

The Supreme Court's unanimous 1954 decision found the 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution had been violated by the separation of public schools based on race. The Brown decision launched educational reform throughout the U.S. and served as a catalyst for the civil rights movement.

Keynote speaker Michael McMillion, a Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service commissioner, told the audience that while Brown vs. the Board of Education desegregated public schools, its impact on American cross-cultural integration has not been pervasive. McMillion said he has worked many cases involving management and labor, and a lack of understanding and communication between the races.

"In labor relations, I have met many corporate leaders who had limited experience in dealing with people of various ethnic backgrounds," McMillion said. He added that while "exposure to diverse ethnic backgrounds at an early age is important," cross-cultural exposure is "vital to the survival of an organization."

Col. Tom Travis, 311th Human Systems Wing commander, said the Air Force is a model for cross-cultural integration. He pointed out that social divisions that exist elsewhere in society have no place on a team focused on its mission of supporting America's warfighters.



NEWS briefs

Construction project

San Antonio Water System will begin installation of a 12" water main next week. The project will mainly affect the West end of the base, around the headquarters building, and will involve trenching on Josue Sanchez Street, Kennedy Circle and Dave Erwin Drive. One lane of each affected street will remain open for traffic during construction. Construction is expected to last for about two months.

Notice of death

The commander of Brooks City-Base regrets the death of Senior Airman Christopher Pedroley, 311 Communications Squadron. Any person or persons having claim for or against the estate of Senior Airman Christopher Pedroley should contact the Summary Court Officer, Lt. Jeff Wuethrich at 536-3091.

Sleep study volunteers

Volunteers are needed at Brooks to participate in a research study on 12-hour biological rhythms. Volunteers must be between the ages of 18 and 62 years. The study requires two brief training sessions and one 12-hour testing day. Pending supervisory approval, civilian and military personnel may be able to log this as a duty day. Participants will not be paid but food is provided. Contact Amy McCrory at 536-3616 for additional information and specific details.

Air Force seeks former Lowry employees

The Air Force Real Property Agency wants to interview people who were employed or stationed at the former Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, Colo.

The AFRPA is conducting the interviews to ensure all environmental conditions on the base have been investigated.

If you worked at Lowry and want to volunteer call 1-800-725-7617 or e-mail the AFRPA public affairs officer at: doug.karas@afropa.pentagon.af.mil.

Courts martials

Two special courts-martial and one general court-martial were recently convened at Brooks. The trials were held at the legal office courtroom in Bldg. 628. In January, a captain was tried at a general court-martial for violating article 134 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, assault, and article 92, UCMJ, failure to obey a lawful order. The captain chose to be tried before a military judge alone. Later that month the judge found the captain was not guilty of assault and guilty of failure to obey a lawful order, in accordance with his plea of guilty to violating his commander's no contact orders on various occasions. The captain was sentenced to be dismissed from the Air Force.

Also in Jan., an airman first class was tried at a special court-martial

for violating Article 85, UCMJ, desertion. The airman chose to be tried before a military judge alone and pled guilty to desertion. The airman received a sentence of a bad conduct discharge, reduction to E-1, and 45 days confinement.

In December, a master sergeant was tried at a special court-martial for violating Article 92, UCMJ, failure to obey a lawful order. The sergeant chose to be tried before a military judge alone and pled guilty to violating his commander's order. The sergeant received a sentence of reduction to E-5 and 100 days confinement.

Drop-in dental screenings available

The Pediatric Dental Department at Lackland Air Force Base is providing drop-in dental screenings for all eligible military medical beneficiaries. One morning each month pediatric dentists will see children 14 years of age or younger at the Sky Lark Community Center, Bldg. 6576. Screenings will be done from 8-11 a.m. in the Longhorn Room on the first floor. No appointment is necessary.

Children will receive a dental screening exam, an opinion about your child's dental condition and appropriate treatment recommendations or alternatives.

Parents should bring a copy of their child's treatment plan, or referral letter from their private dentist.

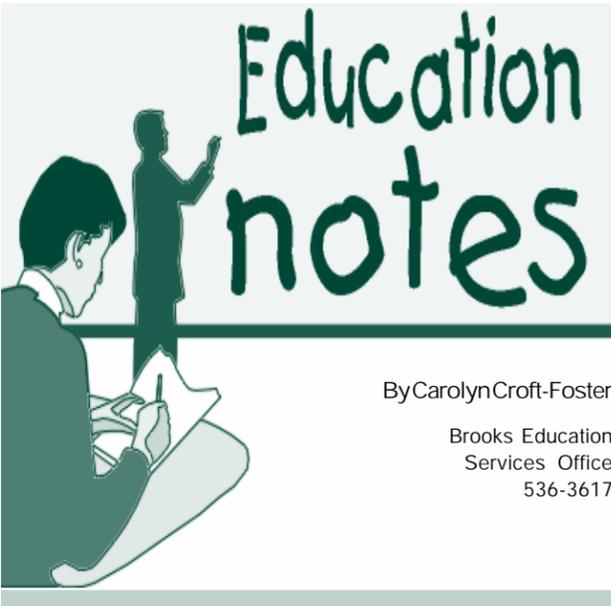
The next drop-in screening clinic is March 10. Contact Col. Jeff Mabry at 292-3327, or Staff Sgt. Shannon Hale at 292-4072, for more information.

Clinic hours

The Brooks clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily to better accommodate patients. Call 536-1847 for an appointment or 536-2087 for more information.

Wings of Change cookbook

Despite an overwhelming response, copies of the new Wings of Change cookbook, published by the Brooks Heritage Foundation, are still available for purchase at the BHF Gift Shop. The new book features recipes from First Lady Laura Bush, Governor Rick Perry, Congressman Ciro Rodriguez, as well as many local restaurant chefs. It also contains a substantial collection of recipes from people at Brooks and in the San Antonio community. The book is a vinyl, three-ring binder, featuring the Sidney Brooks Memorial eagle on the cover. The cookbook is \$18 plus tax. BHF Gift Shop is located in the Aero-medical Evacuation Annex, adjacent to Hangar 9. Gift Shop hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 10 a.m. 4:30 p.m. Friday. For more information, call 531-9767 or e-mail bhf@satx.rr.com.



By Carolyn Croft-Foster

Brooks Education
Services Office
536-3617

Our Lady of the Lake

The representative from OLLU will visit Brooks March 16 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. OLLU has a weekend and evening studies program available for students who currently work during the week. Registration is now open. Tuition for on-base classes is covered by tuition assistance. Call 536-3617 to schedule an appointment.

ACCD on-base classes

Registration is underway for Alamo Community College District. Courses offered by Palo Alto College on base begin March 8. Classes include: Speech, English, History and Sociology. The representative visits Brooks Tuesdays.

Upper Iowa University degrees

Books are now included in the cost of tuition for military members at UIU and there is still time to enroll in on-base classes for the Spring II term. Classes start March 22. The Spring II schedule includes Business Law and State and Local Government. The courses fulfill requirements for Bach-

elor of Science Degrees in Public Administration, Business, Social Sciences and Human Services. Classes meet on base one evening a week for eight weeks. Online courses are also available. The Upper Iowa office in the Brooks Education Center is open Monday through Friday. Stop by the Education Office or call 536-4033 for information.

Funding of recalled CLEP exams

Beginning Feb. 16, DANTES began up-front funding of the CLEP electronic computer based test examination fee at identified National Test Centers. DANTES funds the \$50 test fee for eligible military and civilian examinees on campus. Examinees are responsible for paying the non-refundable, advance registration fee charged by test centers. Students may test only at "military friendly" or "open" schools, including Northwest Vista, St. Mary's University, San Antonio College, University of Texas at San Antonio, Our Lady of the Lake and the University of the Incarnate Word. Call 536-3617 for information.

St. Mary's Graduate School

St. Mary's University offers a variety of programs in San Antonio, including master's degrees in: Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Engineering Systems and teacher certification classes. Recently, St. Mary's Graduate School added on-line programs in Community Counseling and International Relations. For more details on on-line programs visit the Web site at: www.stmarytx.edu. St. Mary's Graduate School awards a tuition grant to active duty and retired military, DoD employees and their spouses, resulting in tuition of \$255 per semester hour. For more information, or to schedule an appointment with a counselor, call 536-3617. The St. Mary's representative is at Brooks Wednesdays.

Webster University

Registration is underway for Spring 2 classes. Saturday classes begin March 15; evening classes March 17. Summer registration begins April 12 and classes start May 24. Core areas offered include:

business; computer resources and information management; health services management; human resources development; human resource management; management; counseling; procurement and acquisitions management and public administration. Webster University also offers the MBA.

Texas State University

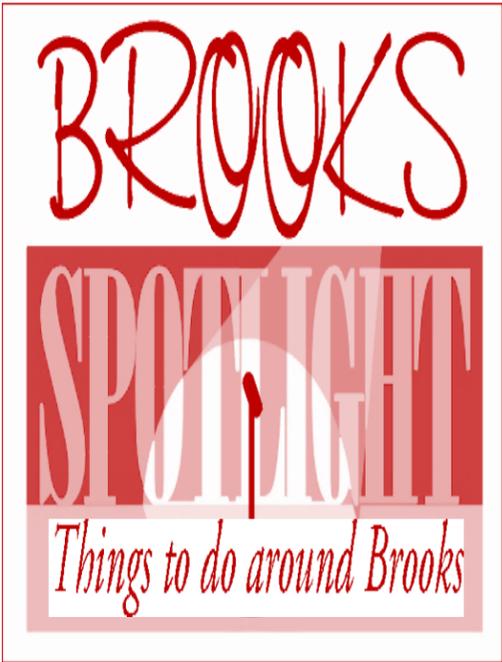
Texas State University offers a bachelor of applied arts and sciences degree. The BAAS degree provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to capitalize on prior work and training experiences. Students pursuing this degree may transfer semester hours previously earned, individualize the degree plan with major emphasis in an occupational field of choice, and earn semester hour credit for work and life experience and training conducted by business, industry and military. Night classes are available in the San Antonio and San Marcos areas. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 536-3618.

Montgomery GI Bill benefits

Active duty personnel, currently enrolled in the Montgomery GI Bill, have the opportunity to increase Chapter 30 GI Bill benefits by \$5,400, from \$23,400 to \$28,800, for a maximum contribution of \$600. The minimum payment is \$20 per month. Contributions can be started and stopped at any time while on active duty. This is not a pay reduction and not a tax savings. This benefit is only open to personnel who first entered active duty on or after July 1, 1985, and elected to participate in the GI Bill. This feature is not open to Vietnam-Era Chapter 30/34 or VEAP Converttees.

Air Force Virtual Education Center

The Virtual Education Center is online. Servicemembers can view information about Air Force Education Centers and Community College of the Air Force and CCAF students can order transcripts. CLEP practice tests are also available. Visit the Web site at: www.afvec.langley.af.mil. or call 536-3617 for more information.



By Jan McMahon
Brooks Services Marketing Office

Outdoor Recreation

Bldg. 1154, 536-2881

Are you going off base to wash your vehicle? Brooks has a car wash located behind Bldg. 1154. It offers easy access, is convenient to base personnel and is open 24 hours a day. The great part is you get 4 1/2 minutes wash time for only 75 cents. A vacuum is also available. Everything you need to clean your vehicle is waiting for you.

Congratulations

Congratulations go to Rose Rodriguez, Helene Baker, Staff Sgt. Adam Cooke and Tech. Sgt. Douglas Hardin, winners of two tickets each to see Brad Paisley in concert at the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo in February. Names were drawn from Comment Cards submitted to the Services Division. Thanks to everyone who took the time to fill out a comment card. Comment cards are available in each Services facility and also on the Services Web page. Your opinion is very important to the Services Division.

Congratulations to Lt. Col. Darrell Criswell, a new club member who won a \$1,000 travel package in the Air Force Club Membership Drive — "Travel The World On Us".

Summer Bash 2004

Family Affair 2004, Bringing Families and Community Together, is scheduled for June 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the base picnic grounds. The event, formerly called the Brooks Base Picnic, incorporates Summer Bash and the picnic into one fun-filled day. Organizations interested in having food, beverage or game booths this year should contact Tech. Sgt. Alphonso Smith at 536-2077 or Jan McMahon at 536-5475. The day will include great music, entertainment, games and a wide variety of foods.

Base Library

Bldg. 705, 536-2634

The library has some really great paperback books for a "one for one" trade. If you don't have a paperback book to trade, take a free one to get started. The library also takes paperback donations.

The library is continuously striving to provide new books. Stop by for a list of the newest books available.

The library doesn't just have books. Gale Group is a database collection available online in the library. Gale Group includes the following databases: InfoTrac Custom Military and Intelligence; InfoTrac Custom Literature; InfoTrac Custom Vocational Technical Careers; InfoTrac OneFile; Student Resource Center; Literature Resource Center; What Do I Read Next?; Business and Company Profiles; Expanded Academic ASAP; and General Reference Center. Other available databases include Social Issues Resources Series; EBSCO Publishing Databases; Jane's Information Group; and OCLC First Search. Ask a member of the library staff for additional information.

Premiere Designs

Bldg. 705, 536-2120

If you are searching for a place to print newsletters or flyers stop by Premiere Designs Monday through Thursday between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Are you tired of the same old wood plaques? Let Premiere Designs help you design a new concept that is both attractive and cost effective.

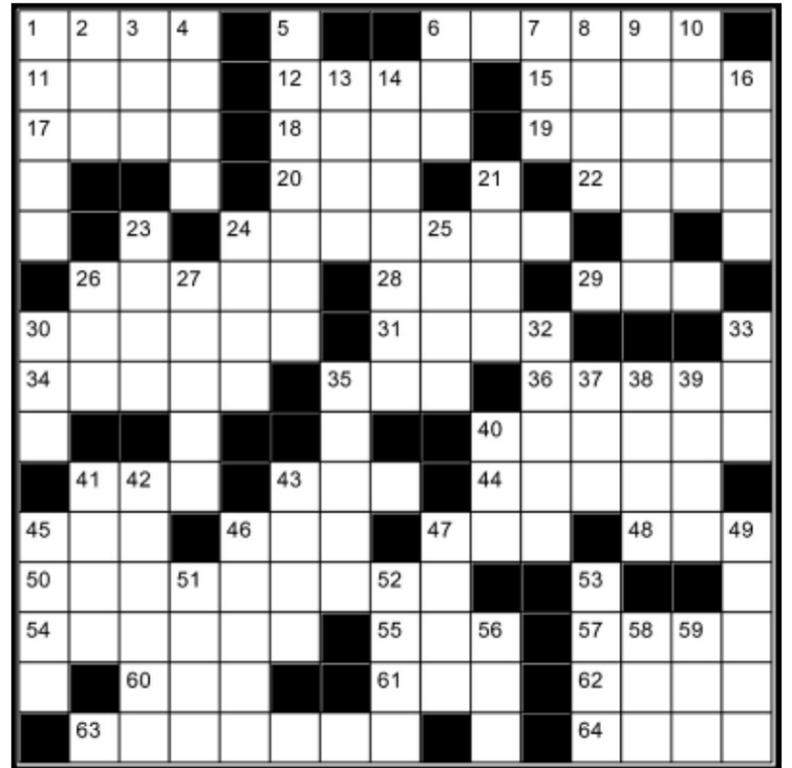
Outdoor Recreation

Bldg. 1154, 536-2881

Rent an indoor storage unit and store the items you want to save. Brooks has 48 units on the flightline across from Outdoor Recreation. A 6' x 12' unit rents for \$35 per month and a 12' x 12' \$60 per month. Call 536-2881 or stop by for more information.

Women's History Month

By 1st Lt. Tony Wickman
Alaskan Command Public Affairs



Solutions, Page 16

ACROSS

1. Lady
6. First woman elected to the US House of Representatives (1916)
11. Regretted
12. Killer whale
15. Craves
17. Stare
18. Condemn
19. Rubber
20. Blockade
22. Star Trek character
24. Woman who established first charitable organization for women
26. French cubist painter Fernand _____
28. Oklahoma town
29. Cash machine
30. Runner-up place
31. Lairs
34. First native born American woman to be made a saint (1809)
35. Military pay statement
36. Small restaurant
40. First woman elected mayor in America (1887)
41. Intimidate
43. Direction to NY from Texas
44. Beneath
45. Actor Vigoda
46. Part of a min.
47. Terminate
48. French lady (abbrev.)
50. First US woman with a medical degree (1849)
54. Wisconsin college
55. Type
57. First woman US governor— Wyoming (1925)
60. Italian three
61. Snakelike fish
62. Bet
63. First woman to win a Pulitzer Prize (1921)
64. Golf props

DOWN

1. Sag
2. Summer mon.
3. Singer Torme
4. Steinbeck novel, East of _____
5. First woman publisher in America
6. Aries sign
7. National radio network (abbrev.)
8. First US woman to receive a patent (1809)
9. Slight
10. Apollo 11 astronaut Armstrong
13. Bellow
14. Cohort
16. Ostracize
21. USAF Korea AB
23. Faction
24. Actor Sean of Sam I Am
25. Beware the _____ of March; Julius Ceasar
26. Confederate general
27. First African-American woman to receive a patent (1885)
30. Compass direction
32. Frequency used for video satellite feed
33. Each
35. Cyclist Armstrong
37. Ancient
38. Object
39. Duration
40. Center of the solar system
41. Competent
42. Affluence
43. Salamander
45. Women's suffragist _____ Hadassah Smith
46. What Tommy Moe is
47. Woman's magazine
49. Relieves
51. Actress Witherspoon of Twilight
52. Garnishment
53. Spoiled child
56. Dutch airlines
58. Single
59. Sault _____ Marie

Family Child Care

Bldg. 1154, 536-2041

An important decision parents face today is where to find reliable, convenient and affordable quality child care. The Family Child Care Program offers that to the Brooks community, including military, DoD civilians, nonappropriated fund employees and contractors. Family child care provides in-home care for up to six children and sometimes the providers' own children. The home a parent chooses should meet the child's emotional and educational needs. Before parents enroll their children in a family child care program, it's important to arrange an interview with the provider to observe interaction, environment and dietary programs. There are other factors to consider, as well.

For a list of interview questions, more information about Brooks providers or how to become a provider, contact Jeanie Smith, the family child care coordinator.

Sidney's

Bldg. 714, 536-3538

Have you tried Sidney's tacos? Select from potato and egg, bacon and egg, sausage and egg, ham and egg or bean and cheese for only \$1 each. Breakfast sandwiches are also available for \$1.50 and two sausage biscuits for \$1. Orders to go can be placed by calling 536-5987.

Sidney's March grill special is a grilled ham and cheese sandwich with French fries.

Health & Fitness Center

Bldg. 940, 536-2188

The 311th Human Systems Wing Plans and Programs will host the Commanders Easter Egg Fun Run/Walk April 14 starting at 11 a.m. Everyone is encouraged to participate. Walking is one of the best exercises to benefit individuals. The first 100 participants to sign-up will receive T-shirts.

Power cycling classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday at 11:30 am and 5 p.m. Power cycling is an indoor non-impact cycling program using a custom designed stationary bike. It is a safe, effective cardiovascular, weight management and training regimen for all fitness levels. Participants must arrive 10-15 minutes prior to sign up for class.

Come out and support the youth basketball program Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Youth, ages 7-17 years, play during this time.

For more details contact Larry Flores at 536-2188.



Computer-based training offers continuing education alternatives to Air Force personnel

By Senior Master Sgt. Mike Walljasper
Brooks Career Assistance Advisor

If your schedule is too hectic to take structured classes, computer-based training may meet your continuing education needs. The Air Force has partnered with SkillSoft, an e-learning provider, to offer a myriad of computer-based training courses for Air Force military and civilian personnel — and it's free.

Some of the courses offered include:

— 1,200 IT courses; includes Microsoft, Cisco, Java, Unix, Networking and Security; and

— 200 Business skill courses; includes Leadership, Team-Building, Budgeting, Customer Relations

Support provided includes:

— Seven-day 24-hour access to content subject matter experts; and

— On-line reference-ware to more than 90 unabridged IT publications.

Certifications preparation includes:

— Test preparation material for more than 40 commercial IT verifications.

The site offers tools to browse courses by interest and track individual progress. It also features discussion forums and meeting rooms with workshops and seminars.

The Web site is accessible from any computer with internet access. Full access to courseware is granted to active duty Air Force, Reserve, and Guard personnel and Department of the Air Force civilian personnel.

Limited access is available for all others accessing an Air Force network to carry out their official duties. This will only provide access to specified Air Force developed courses. All personnel other than those listed above, such as military services and contractors, fall into this category, according to the Web site.

Visit <http://usaf.smartforce.com>, register and begin learning today. Registration is required but is easy to complete. Contact Senior Master Sgt. Mike Walljasper at 536-5528 for more information.



Midweek mass

Midweek mass at the Brooks Chapel is held Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.

Mass is held each first Friday of the month and on holy days of obligation. Mass is open for the entire base Roman Catholic community.

Lifebuilder's series

The Lifebuilder's Lunchtime Series continues Wednesdays at noon at the Chapel Annex. Contact the Chapel staff for information on the subjects featured this month.

Chapel schedule

Weekdays:

11:30 a.m. — Mass or Eucharistic service

Wednesdays:

Noon — Lifebuilders luncheon

6 p.m. — Catholic choir rehearsal

Thursdays:

7:30 p.m. Protestant choir rehearsal

Sundays:

9 a.m. — Catholic Mass

10:30 a.m. — Catholic religious education

9 a.m. — Protestant Sunday School, ages 3-adult

10:30 a.m. — Protestant Worship, includes children's church

6 p.m. — Protestant Praise and Worship service



Banks

Q&A

FULL NAME:

Staff Sgt. Eric Ronn Banks

DUTY TITLE, ORGANIZATION:

War Reserve Materiel Specialist, Air Force Medical Support Agency

WHAT IS MY JOB?:

I inventory, build and configure Alaska Shelters for world-wide deployment

BIRTHDAY:

Jan. 22, 1974

HOMETOWN:

San Bernardino, Calif.

FAMILY STATUS:

Married with no children, but trying.

PET PEEVE:

People who have nicknames for themselves, or talk in the third person.

INSPIRATIONS:

My parents. I aspire to use what they have given me growing up, and to apply the lessons to my own family.

HOBBIES:

Watching science fiction movies, playing basketball and football.

BOOKS AT BEDSIDE:

Why read when there are DVDs? Hey that might be a possible motto!

I JOINED THE MILITARY BECAUSE:

I am from a military family. My Mom was in the Marines, and my Dad retired from the Air Force.

FIVE YEAR GOAL:

In this day and age, stay married! Professionally, keep climbing the rank ladder. Also, I'd like to have a child.

ULTIMATE GOAL:

is to be a good husband and eventually a father. Retire from the Air Force and buy a house near a beach. Raise my child not to be a Star Trek freak like me.

IF I WON THE LOTTERY:

I'd give money to my family and in-laws; give to a charity that isn't well known; buy a Mercedes and finally, go to a bar and say "this round's on me." I've always wanted to do that!

FAVORITE MUSIC:

R&B and rap

MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IS:

finding a woman who puts up with me and shares this journey we call life.

MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION IS:

my TV remote. Wait, my wife will be reading this, so it's a picture of us at our first high school dance.

Brooks Personality PROFILE

The force is with him

By Steve VanWert
Staff writer

The force is with Staff Sgt. Eric Banks, both on duty and off. On duty, it's the Air Force; off duty, it's just the "force," the Star Wars kind.

An admitted Star Wars and Star Trek aficionado, Sergeant Banks has been a science fiction fan all his life. "I guess you'd call me a 'Trekkie,'" he said, "but I don't dress up in costume or put on fake ears. I just love the stories."

The sergeant, assigned to the Air Force Medical Support Agency, began his Sci-Fi love affair when a child. "I loved the original 'Star Trek' series," he said. "I loved Capt. James Kirk and Mr. Spock and Dr. McCoy, and the new TV series, 'Enterprise,' but the latest movie, 'Star Trek Nemesis,' was great, too. I also love the whole 'Star Wars' series, with Luke and Hans and Princess Leia. I just love the whole genre."

But his wife isn't quite as excited about Darth, Scottie and Yoda.

"We have an agreement," he said. "I don't make her go to my science fiction movies and she doesn't make me watch her tearjerkers."

Their relationship seems to work fine, despite their cinematic differences. At least they can enjoy comedies together. "We just saw '50 First Dates' with Drew Barrymore. It was hilarious."

On duty, it's the Air Force that's most important - and familiar. Sergeant Banks grew up a military brat with an Air Force father and a Marine mother. Born in San Bernadino, Calif., he spent his youth living in RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom; Langley Air Force Base, Va.; Randolph AFB, Texas; and Peterson AFB in Colorado Springs, Colo.

"We moved every four years like clockwork," he said. His father retired at Peterson as a senior master sergeant. His mother gave up her Marine career to raise him and his sister.

"I feel that Colorado Springs is my real home," he said. "That's where I tell people I'm from."

So does his wife. They met at Doherty High School in Colorado Springs in 1990. They've been together ever since. They married in 1996, a year after he enlisted in the Air Force. It was the career choice he always intended to make.

"I always knew I'd join the Air Force," he said. "I worked a few odd jobs after high school, but I was just waiting for the right time to enlist."



Photos by Airman First Class Samantha Shieh

Sergeant Banks' first assignment after basic training and technical school was at Andrews AFB, Md. He was there during the terrorist bombings on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I was actually preparing to move to my next assignment," he said. "But because of the enhanced security, the moving truck couldn't get on base."

Eventually, the permanent change of station came to fruition, and Sergeant Banks was reassigned to AFMSA, in Fort Worth, Texas. About a year ago, the office moved to Brooks City-Base, although he's physically located on East Kelly.

The sergeant inventories, configures, builds and ships Alaska Shelters for world-wide deployment.

"Alaska Shelters are like big tents used as transportable hospitals," he said. "Picture a scene from 'MASH,' but connect the tents together to make one unit. It takes four or five people to put up a unit. The idea is that they're moveable and can be set up wherever we deploy as portable hospitals. In fiscal 2003, we built \$1.8 million worth of Alaska Shelters."

Sergeant Banks has been in the Air Force for eight years. He just tested for promotion to technical sergeant for the first time.

"I hear this is the hardest stripe to make," he said. "I don't expect to get promoted the first time around, but taking the test will help me next testing cycle. And who knows, maybe I'll get lucky this time."

The sergeant plans on completing his Air Force career and retiring to the West Coast. Specific plans, though, are a little vague. His wife is planning to begin work on a paralegal degree, but Sergeant Banks hasn't decided what he's going to do after retirement.

"First of all," he said, "it's a long way off. But I think I'll get into Astronomy." Being a military brat and living in

so many parts of the country has resulted in a series of, well, unique sports affiliations. "I love the Washington Redskins," he said, "but I'm also a Los Angeles Lakers fan, and Colorado Avalanche fan and a Chicago Cubs fan. I guess I don't really have a 'home team' to cheer for."

He doesn't just watch: he plays sports, as well. Although Sergeant Banks arrived on base too late to sign up for flag football, he's planning to play next year.

"I love all sports," he said. "I play basketball, football and almost everything else."

But he missed watching the Super Bowl this year. He was in a bus in the parking lot of Reliant Stadium.

"A bunch of us volunteered to provide security at the game," he said, "but they never needed us, so we waited in the bus until the game was over. There was a portable television, but it was so small and there were so many guys watching, I never even got to see the commercials. But we did make it to the official After-Game Party. I got to see a couple of the players, as well as some celebrities. I recognized New England Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady and place-kicker Adam Viniteri. Aerosmith was there, and so was Kid Rock. Snoop Dog came in with about 50 guys surrounding him. It was wild."

During the duty day, Sergeant Banks' Air Force ties are strong.

"Now that I've been in the service for awhile, it's nice to belong to a team," he said. "It's nice to have a job that counts for something; a job where other service members depend on you and you can actually see progression. Sounds corny, but that's how I feel."

Off duty, he can feel the force all around him. He plans, naturally, to "live long and prosper."

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Guide dogs always pause to lend a helping paw

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

They don't answer phones at the "yelp" desk, but doggedly perform all other required tasks. They come with a pedigree instead of a warranty. Yet they never fail to work, with handler's care as their favored perk.

As specially trained canines, guide dogs make no bones about being extremely sensitive to the needs of visually impaired partners who rely on them implicitly.

Not too long ago, however, visually impaired Texans did not have the local option of putting their trust in breeds trained to meet their needs. There were no working dog organizations in the Lone Star State until the non-profit Guide Dogs of Texas was founded in San Antonio in 1989. Since then, community volunteers, including some from Brooks, have joined an ever-growing litter of helpers who have provided comfort and guidance to locally trained working dogs.

"Our (initial) goal was to provide guide dogs to clients in the southwestern United States. Over time, we have re-directed our focus to potential clients within the state of Texas," said Debra Baker, Guide Dogs of Texas executive director. She and her husband Ken founded the 501(c)(3) organization, also known as the Southwest Guide Dog Foundation, as a charitable outreach for visually impaired Texans who no longer have to rely on guide dog providers from other regions of the country.



Gail Walden has developed a close bond with her guide dog Louise, an energetic 5-year old Black Labrador who helps her deal with her deteriorating vision.



Photos by Rudy Purificato

Louise, a 5-year old Black Labrador guide dog, demonstrates to her owner Gail Walden her appreciation and anticipation before a walk.



Debra Baker, left, with Guide Dogs of Texas, and Mary Kay Stewart, a Brooks family member, cuddle a pair of Black Labrador puppies that will be trained as guide dogs.

The concept of dogs helping visually impaired people, Mrs. Baker explained, originated in Germany after World War I when German shepherds guided blinded combat veterans. That concept was further developed in the United Kingdom by the Guide Dog Mobility Institution, a model on which the Guide Dogs of Texas training program is based. In 1929, The Seeing Eye was established in Morristown, N.J., as the first U.S. organization that provided guide dogs to visually impaired Americans. Today, about 14 guide dog training schools operate in the U.S.

Since its inception, Guide Dogs of Texas has committed its limited resources to matching guide dogs with visually impaired people, referred to as clients. The organization operates on a \$250,000 annual budget, funded by the Combined Federal Campaign, grants and private donations. A small fulltime staff is augmented by about 60 volunteers, one of whom is Mary Kay Stewart, wife of U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine's Col. John Garland.

"I've been a volunteer coordinator since December 2003. It's something I've always wanted to do," said Mrs. Stewart, while a Black Labrador puppy innocently slobbered on her. New to the guide dog training program, the puppy that lavished unsolicited affection on Mrs. Stewart is part of the organization's Puppy Walking Program.

"We need volunteers to rear and socialize puppies, from the age of 10 weeks to approximately 16 months," said Mrs. Baker. Labrador and Golden Retrievers, historically the most suitable breeds for guide dog work, begin their training as Puppy Walking Program participants.

Before puppies are placed in volunteers' homes, the animals are medically screened and behaviorally tested. "I look for pups that don't react to any distractions. We want them to be cautiously interested, but not afraid," said Michelle Pelletier, who runs the puppy training program.

The organization, which does not have a

breeding program, purchases dogs from several sources. They recently acquired Willow and Tucker, Black Labrador puppies, from Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York State.

"We want easy-going, laid back dogs," said Ms. Pelletier, explaining that regional differences in guide dog temperament exists. New York trainers, she said, want more assertive, pushy dogs for maneuvering through congested pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Occasionally, Guide Dogs of Texas acquires adult dogs, like Noah, who graduated from the organization's training program in 2000. Noah's gentle disposition wasn't suitable for New York life as a guide dog.

Nevertheless, this Texas organization relies mostly on puppies which requires additional resources. They always need Puppy Walker volunteers to house and care for dogs indoors, and appropriately expose them daily to a variety of people, places and things.

When ready to be matched with clients, dogs and masters are then jointly trained. "We match the personality and lifestyle of the dog with the personality and lifestyle of the client," Mrs. Baker explained. "We don't want a couch potato dog with a person who is very active."

Like Puppy Walker volunteers, clients are interviewed and screened. "Clients must have some residual vision, but be legally blind," said Mrs. Baker. The organization welcomes client referrals, 17 years old or older, who decide they need a guide dog.

For some, like Gail Walden, seeking canine help is a big transition. "With a cane, all information is sensed tactilely. With a dog it's kinetic," said Ms. Walden, a medical research scientist at Audie Murphy Veteran's Administration Hospital. She initially had concerns common among those with limited, but deteriorating vision. She said, "If you have some vision, it's harder to trust a dog."

Ms. Walden, diagnosed in 1981 with a condition that is gradually destroying her night and peripheral vision, relied for years on a cane to help guide her. She became socially isolated. "I felt that by using a white cane the disability was directed at me," she said. Ms. Walden explained that when she was matched with a guide dog, public attention was re-directed from her to Louise, a frisky Black Labrador that basks in the limelight.

"It's a life changing experience. Life moves much faster with Louise. I (now) have much more confidence. I like to think of this as ability awareness."

For more information, or to become a volunteer, call 366-4081, e-mail dbswgd@juno.com or visit the Web site at: www.guidedogsoftexas.org.



Women's History Month solutions

D	A	M	E		G			R	A	N	K	I	N	
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Prevention

Continued from Page 1

General Brown wrote.

"Pay special attention to the quality of your suicide prevention briefings," the general wrote. The Air Force requires active-duty and civilian personnel to attend suicide prevention briefings once during the 15-month Air Expeditionary Force cycle.

In light of the recent suicides - none of which occurred in Operations Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom — General Brown urged commanders to "review how well we continue to implement the 11 initiatives that serve as the foundation of the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program."

The 11 initiatives are outlined in Air Force Pamphlet 44-160 Air Force Suicide Prevention Program: Description of Program Initiatives and Outcomes. The 11 initiatives are: build community awareness; leadership involvement; investigative interview policy; Professional Military Education; epidemiological database; delivery of community preventive services; community education and training; Critical Incident Stress Management; In-

tegrated Delivery System; limited patient-psychotherapist privilege and unit risk factor assessment.

The Air Force takes a community approach in suicide prevention, encouraging every member of the Air Force to take responsibility in reducing the number of suicides.

A key element of the program is to make available a steady pipeline of suicide prevention tools available for Air Force people at all levels. So far in 2004, the Air Force Medical Service has issued the 2004 Leader's Guide for Managing Personnel in Distress, which is geared to help commanders, first sergeants and other leaders recognize when their personnel are distressed, how to respond appropriately, link their personnel to resources, and get them help as soon as possible.

The guide presents information on 35 distressing situations, provides checklists detailing potential behaviors/signs reflective of the person's reaction to the distressing event, and responses/resources the leaders may want to utilize in responding to the

person's needs. The guide was widely distributed as a CD-ROM to every squadron commander and first sergeant across the Air Force. The guide can be viewed on the *dot.mil*-restricted Air Force Suicide Prevention Program Web site.

Other tools issued recently include:

- "The Air Force Guide for Managing Suicidal Behavior: Strategies, Resources and Tools," an 88-page clinical guide designed to assist mental health professionals in assessing and managing high-risk behavior.

- The Air Force Suicide Prevention Web site, which is geared toward greatly improving access to suicide prevention information and materials.

- The 2003 Community Suicide Prevention Briefing, a new multimedia briefing that includes slides and video.

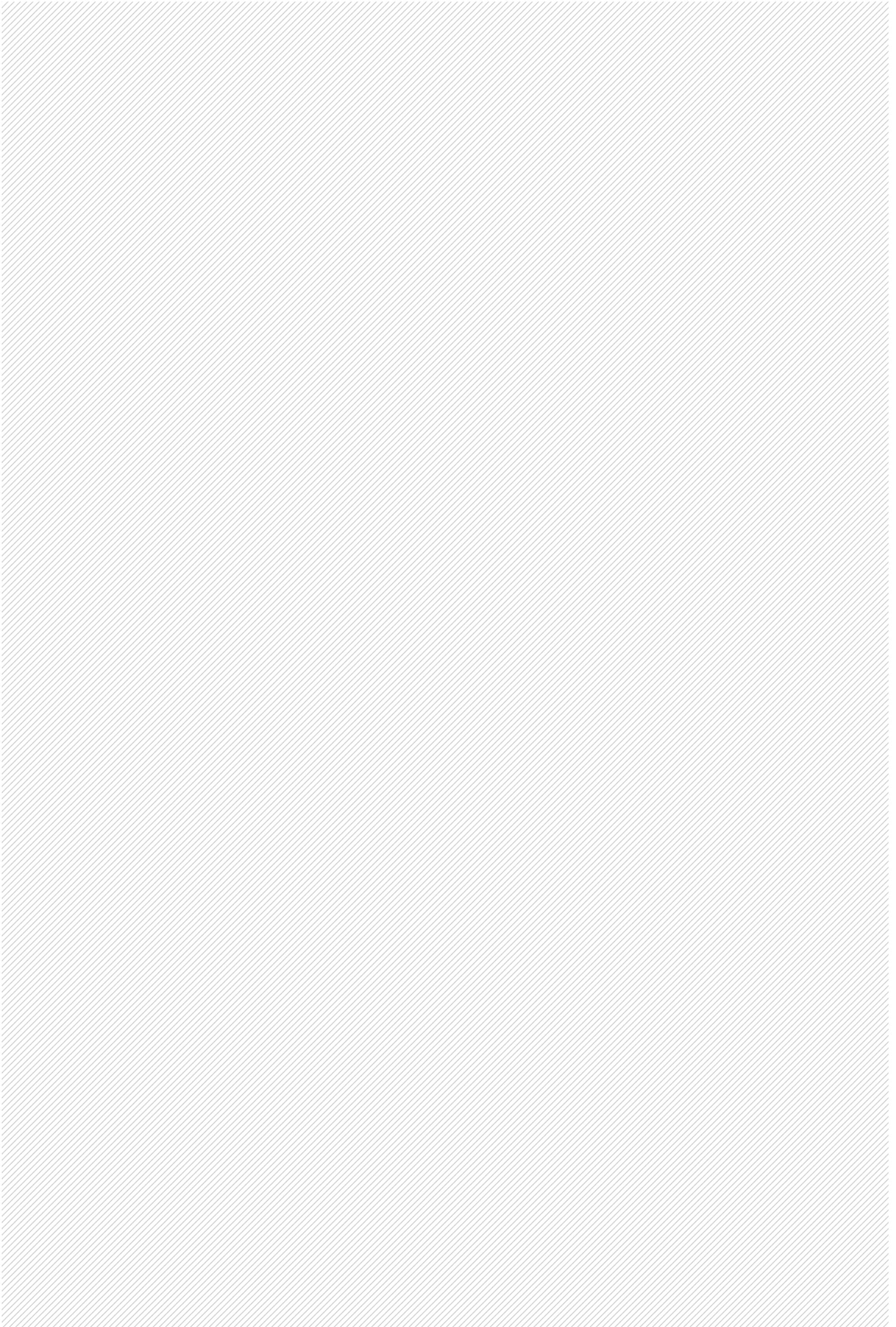
- The 2003 Leadership Suicide Prevention Briefing, a new multimedia briefing involving slides and video. This is geared toward wing, group and squadron commanders.

The service's suicide prevention program has received a great deal of acclaim and is commonly hailed as the

best program of its type in the world. In December 2003, a landmark University of Rochester study of suicide in the U.S. Air Force concluded that the service's suicide-prevention program reduced the risk of suicide by 33 percent during the past six years.

Also in 2003 the Air Force's Suicide Prevention Program was hailed as a "model program" in a landmark report released by the president's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. In 2001, then-U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher made the program a model for the nation and incorporated it into the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

In the mid-1990s - amid rising suicide rates in the military — AF leadership recognized that suicide is a community problem and the formal program was implemented in 1996. From 1991 to 1996, the active-duty suicide rate was 14.1 per 100,000. During the seven years of the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program's existence, through the end of 2003, the suicide rate was 9.2 per 100,000.





Royal AF hoop squad learns from Brooks, SA matchups

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

They took their lumps, made adjustments and learned a lot about American military basketball during their inaugural trip to San Antonio in which they played seasoned base varsity teams. Now, the British Royal Air Force varsity basketball team is ready for the rough and tumble play of European foes who they hope to dominate.

This All-Royal Air Force team, composed of the top dozen players from throughout the United Kingdom, spent two weeks learning American-style basketball from Feb. 3-16. The trip was arranged through a British Air Force exchange officer stationed at Lackland Air Force Base. Lackland hosted the team, providing them lodging and a training venue at the former Kelly AFB's Bennett Fitness Center.

"Normally we go every year to Hurlbert Field, Florida, but we had an opportunity to come here," said team manager Tony Fagan, a RAF warrant officer. Warrant Officer Fagan explained that for the past six years the RAF varsity squad has conducted a mid-season training camp in the U.S. "This is the birthplace of basketball, and the facilities and resources here



Photo by Rudy Purificato

British Royal Air Force varsity team point guard Garrett Evans encounters stiff resistance from Brooks varsity defenders Rob Taylor, left, and Robert Garcia during regulation play recently. The British team won the game in overtime.

makes it conducive for us to learn the game. What you have in America far outweighs anything that we have in the UK," he said.

The annual trip has become a valuable tool in which to prepare the team for the Inter-Services Championships against the Royal Navy and Army. This year's tournament was scheduled for March 4 in Plymouth, England. They also compete a month later at the prestigious AIRNORTH Basketball Competition that features the U.S. Air Force -Europe varsity team as well as Air Force varsity squads from Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Poland and Denmark.

Their U.S. training camp provides the team a variety of competition that

enables them to learn different playing styles while adjusting to varying offenses and defenses. Playing against Brooks, Fort Sam Houston and Lackland AFB showed them how to adjust to American-style fast breaks.

"English players are more physical, but American players are a lot quicker and athletic," said RAF team captain Jerry Armstrong, a 6' 5" small forward. "The teams we play in England don't have the type of intensity on defense that we see with American teams," he said.

Armstrong's squad was overwhelmed by the intensity and fast breaks displayed by Fort Sam Houston and Lackland. Brooks also had the RAF squad reeling in the early stages of

" English players are more physical, but American players are a lot quicker and athletic. **"**

Jerry Armstrong
RAF team captain

their recent contest here, but the British team made adjustments and prevailed.

"We try to slow the game down and use the 24-second clock," the team captain said, noting that when they try to run with their opposition they have problems.

"We're better man-to-man than playing the zone because of our size," he said. Historically the team features two or three players who are at least 6' 7".

The RAF squad took advantage of their height advantage over Brooks after the first quarter of play, eventually winning the contest in overtime.

Their game against Lackland, the 2001 Air Education and Training Command champion, demonstrated to the RAF team they had a lot yet to learn. Lackland beat the Brits by 47 points.

"They're just learning the game. We had a strong defense, dominated the boards and ran the ball," said Jerome Riley, Lackland varsity hoop team head coach.

The RAF squad learned from the experience and beat a Lackland intramural squad the next day by 21 points.

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RAF hoop squad beats Brooks in overtime

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

In a first-of-its kind contest at Brooks, the homecourt varsity hoop squad saved its best performance of the season when they took the British All-Royal Air Force varsity men's basketball team into overtime, losing the heartbreaker exhibition contest 94-90.

Considered underdogs, winless Brooks appeared determined to beat a team they had never played against. Their determination was similar to what they demonstrated at the 2003 Air Force Materiel Command tournament where they finished as runnersup.

While Brooks came up short, head coach Hosea Talbert was pleased by their tenacious play, calling it a team effort.

That effort began at the outset as Brooks, at a decided height disadvantage, used its quickness and athleticism to counter the Brits' strong outside shooting. However, the visitors made adjustments in the second quarter to take a 43-33 half-time lead.

Like he did at the 2003 AFMC tourney, star power forward Rob Taylor stepped up his level of play when he scored 21 of his game-high 31 points in the second half. Brooks overcame a 12-point second half deficit primarily on fast breaks and forced turnovers



Photo by Rudy Purificato

The British Royal Air Force varsity squad dominated the free throw line in a recent exhibition game against Brooks at the base fitness center. Forward Art Bryan hit this shot early in the contest, won in overtime by the British team.

that had the British team on their heels. Forcing their opponents to play their style of basketball, Brooks finally tied the game at 67-67 with 4:40 left in regulation.

Ahead by two points with just 6.8 seconds remaining, Brooks lost the lead when RAF team captain Gerry Armstrong hit a three-pointer to put his team up 81-80. Brooks veteran forward David King sent the contest into overtime when he hit one of two free throws to tie the game.

The difference in the game came down to the free throw line. The British team hit 10 of 12 foul shots to seal their first win against an American military team during their two-week U.S. training camp.

Komen 'Race for the Cure' team registration ends today

The 7th Annual Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation San Antonio Race for the Cure is scheduled for March 27 at the Alamodome in downtown San Antonio. Recruit your military team of 10 or more and get registered. There will be an award for the largest military team.

The deadline for team registration is today.

The annual event begins with race day registration at 6 a.m., followed by a memorial service and team photos at 7 a.m. and warm-ups at 7:45 a.m. The competitive runners begin at 8 a.m., with the Coed 5K Run/Walk, 3.1 mile and 1-mile Family Fun Walk, kicking off at 8:15 a.m. Survivor recognition and the awards ceremony are scheduled for 9:30 a.m.

Since nearly 3,000 participants and more than 300 teams are already registered, participants are encouraged to carpool and arrive before 7 a.m. Due to safety concerns, neither inline skates or pets are allowed on the course. Maps of the 5K run and the one-mile walk courses are available on the Web site.

For more information log on to: www.sakomen.org or call the Race Hotline at (210) 822-8700.

Individuals who don't want to participate but are interested in supporting the event can pledge, find a participant to sponsor on the Web site, make a donation or volunteer for a variety of tasks between now and the event, including race day. Volunteer information is also available on the Web site.

This event will take place rain or shine. Only extreme circumstances will cause cancellation. If cancelled, monies will be designated as donations to the San Antonio Affiliate of the Komen Foundation. Refunds are not available.



Intramural hoop tourney extends to team with heart

By Rudy Purificato
311th Human Systems Wing

A winless team with a lot of heart, that lost a popular player killed in a tragic accident, has inspired the Brooks fitness center to allow for the first time in memory all intramural basketball teams to advance to the base championship tournament that begins March 9.

The 311th Communications Squadron, which finished the regular season Feb. 24 with an 0-9 record, never wavered from its commitment to league play in the wake of the death of their point guard, Christopher Pedroley. Pedroley was killed Jan. 31 in a traffic accident that also injured his wife of three months, Elizabeth.

"They (Comm Squadron) always showed up for a game, despite all the stress the team was going through," said fitness center specialist Hosea Talbert, who played against them as a member of the 311th Mission Support Group squad.

Pablo Segura, fitness center specialist in charge of intramural basketball, decided to include the last-place team in the tourney originally intended for the top four teams in the league.

The 68th Information Operations Squadron, the 2004 league and defending base champions, will try to repeat as the base winners. Last year, the

68th IOS upset the 2003 league champion 311th MSG squad in a dramatic 38-36 victory with a last-second shot at the buzzer.

"They are the team to beat, but we're going to make some noise," said Mr. Talbert of his MSG team, I.C.E., which stands for Intensity, Concentration and Execution. MSG, with a 4-5 regular season record, wouldn't be playing in the post-season tourney if it weren't for the decision to include all teams.

Mr. Talbert said the 68th IOS is loaded with talent, has a deep bench and has earned the reputation of beating team in the post. "Collectively, they have a great team. Overall they have the best athletes," said Mr. Talbert, who knows talent when he sees it as Brooks varsity hoop head coach.

The double-elimination tourney runs March 9-30, with two games played every Tuesday and Thursday at 11 a.m. and noon at the fitness center. The base championship game is scheduled for March 30 at noon.

FINAL 2004 LEAGUE STANDINGS

Team	W	L
68th IOS	7	1
Geritols	5	3
AFIOH	5	3
YA	5	5
MSG	4	5
Comm.	0	9



Photo by Rudy Purificato

Leading by example

Air Force Institute for Operational Health Director Eric Stephens, center, leads co-workers on a chilly jog near the Fitness Center during the AFIOH Commander's Fun Run recently.

Health & fitness

Commanders' Fitness Club

The Brooks Commanders' Fitness Club meets at the Health and Fitness Center every Wednesday at 7 a.m. for a run/walk. Military and civilian personnel are encouraged to participate. Participants receive a Commanders' Fitness Club T-shirt after participating four times. Additional prizes are offered for other sessions. Sign up at the Fitness Center or call 536-2188 for details.

Power Cycling

Power cycling is offered every Tuesday and Thursday at 11:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the Fitness Center. Classes are free but limited seating is available for the first 12 participants to sign up for each class. Participants must bring bottled water, a towel and an attitude to begin the ride of your life. Contact the Fitness Center staff at 536-2188 for more information.